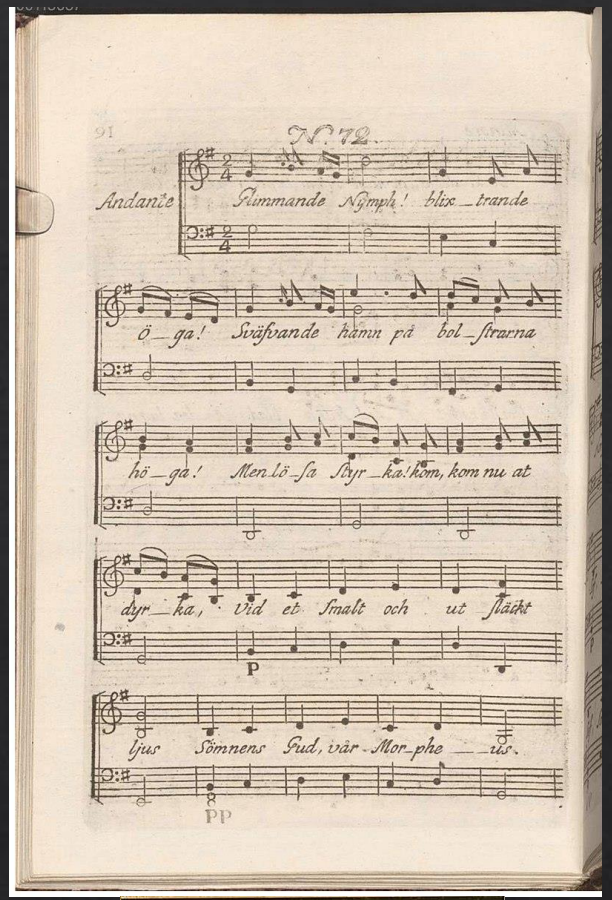
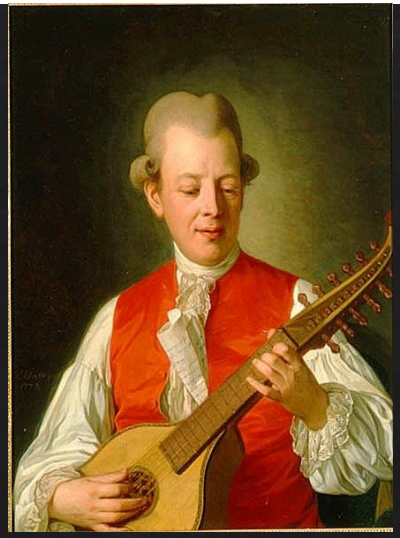
Glimmande Nymf Epistel 72

Carl Michael Bellman is a central figure in the Swedish ballad tradition and a powerful influence in Swedish music, known for his 1790 Fredman's Epistles and his 1791 Fredman's Songs. A solo entertainer, he played the cittern, accompanying himself as he performed his songs at the royal court.
Jean Fredman (1712 or 1713–1767) was a real watchmaker of Bellman's Stockholm. The fictional Fredman, alive after 1767, but without employment, is the supposed narrator in Bellman's epistles and songs. The epistles, written and performed in different styles, from drinking songs and laments to pastorales, paint a complex picture of the life of the city during the 18th century. A frequent theme is the demimonde, with Fredman's cheerfully drunk Order of Bacchus, a loose company of ragged men who favour strong drink and prostitutes. At the same time as depicting this reality, Bellman creates a Rococo picture of life, full of classical allusion, following the French post-Baroque poets. The women, including the beautiful Ulla Winblad, are "nymphs", while Neptune's festive troop of followers and sea-creatures sport in Stockholm's waters.The juxtaposition of elegant and low life is humorous, sometimes burlesque, but always graceful and sympathetic. The songs are "most ingeniously" set to their music, which is nearly always borrowed and skilfully adapted.

Glimmande nymf came to Bellman in 1771, in one of his first attempts at songwriting.



Glittering nymph, (with) flashing eyes,
soaring apparation on the high feather-bed,
benevolent strength,
come, come now to worship
by a thin and extinguished candle
the god of sleep, our Morpheus!
The shutter is already closed, the gate is locked,
the nightcap is fastened 'round the crown of your head;
already Norström's wig
hangs on its hook.
Sleep, fall asleep to my music!